



Voluntary Ozone Action Plans submitted

On the 4th of December 1997, Governor Miller signed an executive order requiring state employees to change driving habits during the coming high ozone season. Every department and agency located in the metro counties of Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Coweta, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Paulding and Rockdale, plus units of the University System located in these counties were required to submit plans by March 31, 1998. Many departments scrambled to meet the deadline for plans to implement this cleaner air initiative.

Plans detailed how each department will go about reducing 20% of single occupancy vehicle trips for employees driving to and from work during ozone action days. Those are the 10 or 12 days during the season when ground level ozone is unhealthy. Pollution can be so bad that outside activity should be limited.

Plans for 20% reductions for the entire ozone season, which is May 1 through September 30, for the year 1999 must also be ready.

The Voluntary Ozone Action Program (VOAP), headed by Jeane Pierce, was launched with the goal of promoting simple and effective actions that could be taken to reduce ground level ozone when conditions were right for high concentration of ozone. She and others are working to develop an ozone alert system of notification. This way, employees will know the days special measures are to be taken.

Also, VOAP surveyed 60,000 state employees in the metro area for current commuting patterns and preferences. A list was developed of potential ride sharers for those wishing to take this action during the summer months. Each department has a VOAP representative that helped with this. They are also helping evaluate and implement individual department plans.

What is ozone anyway? It is a

complex form of oxygen. In the upper atmosphere it is called the ozone layer and it's a good thing. It protects us from harmful ultraviolet rays. Ozone pollution, or ground level ozone, is a bad thing. On a hot day, the sun "bakes" unburned gases from tailpipe emissions, fuel evaporations, smokestacks and oil based paints and solvents. This creates an odorless, colorless gas that can cause respiratory problems, as well as threaten economic growth in our region. Much of the debate currently going on about development in and around Atlanta revolves around pollution. There could even be a ban on new or expanding industry. A prime example would be the proposed 417 acre mall to be built in Gwinnett. It would generate 210 tons of nitrous oxide annually, and more than 80,000 auto trips each day on already congested roads, according to a recent article in the *Atlanta Constitution*.

**...Atlantans have
the longest average
commute of any
city in the US...**

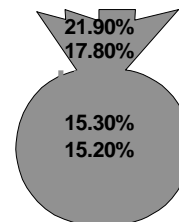
There are many compelling reasons to address this problem. Atlanta has the longest average commute of any US city---36 miles a day. Which probably makes us the leader in the world as well. Altogether, Atlantans drive 100 million miles a day. Adults breathe about 20,000 times a day---more if exercising or working. Then our intake level can increase 10 times that amount. The pollution can be so dangerous then that health scientists doing research only use exercising volunteers in their research.

Another very big reason to clean up the air is the loss of 650 million in federal transportation dol-

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Comparative Fund Performance for Periods Ending 06/30/97

Fund Categories/New & Old Funds	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
Balanced Stock & Bonds Funds			
Dodge & Cox Balanced	22.30%	19.40%	15.70%
Vanguard Wellesley Income	16.80%	14.70%	12.00%
Growth & Income Funds-			
Dodge & Cox Stock	31.70%	26.60%	21.00%
(Vanguard Windsor II)	31.50%	26.50%	19.40%
Mid/Large Cap Value Funds-			
Delaware Decatur Total Return	33.10%	25.10%	18.60%
(Vanguard Windsor II)	31.50%	26.50%	19.40%
S&P Index Funds-			
Vanguard Institutional Index (Old & New)	34.80%	28.90%	19.80%
S&P 500 Index (Benchmark)	34.70%	28.80%	19.80%
Large Cap Growth Funds-			
MFS Research	23.40%	26.70%	22.10%
Fidelity Magellan	25.90%	22.80%	18.30%
Small/Mid Capt Aggr. Growth Funds-			
Munder Small Company Growth	19.30%	29.50%	21.90%
Fidelity O-T-C Portfolio	19.60%	24.90%	17.80%
International Equity Funds-			
Delaware Pooled International Equity	26.70%	16.30%	15.30%
United International Growth	23.00%	14.10%	15.20%



Open enrollment highlighted by new 401k offering

Beginning July 1 a new deferred compensation option will be offered to all employees: a Qualified Trust Plan, commonly known as a 401k. The new plan, along with the existing 457 plan, will offer mostly new investment options for both. This comes at a time when retirement planning is becoming ever more critical.

Through the Georgia Merit System, state employees will have strong financial tools to supplement their retirement plans. Through the deferred compensation program, you can participate in a supplemental retirement program that you direct, and it's tax free. When you retire, you might be eligible to collect moneys from social security, pension and your personal savings---your deferred comp comes in here. Because of changing lifestyles and workstyles, many people will live in retirement 20 to 30 years and more. The question is will you be able to maintain

the lifestyle you had at retirement for all those years? Deferred comp can go a long way in securing that future.

The big disadvantage of deferring part of your salary is you can't get to it. But that's also the big advantage!

Just as an example, if you are in a 34% tax bracket, to save \$100 a month would cost you only \$66 if you save in deferred comp because the remaining \$34 would have gone for taxes. If you wanted to save \$100 after you made it in paid salary, it would cost you \$152!

So, the GMS listened to employee needs and changes are coming. There were two driving factors bringing about the offering of 401k to us. Because few, if any, people stay in one job their whole lives, retirement funds need to be portable. In the past, you might leave a posi-

tion before you were there long enough to receive any benefits. The company then would be able to take their contributions back. But 401k plans allow you more control over your retirement assets and any contributions you make stay with you, even when you terminate. If you already have a 401k and you come to work for the state, you can roll it into a new 401k. If you already have a 401k with the state and you leave, you can roll it into an IRA or to your new retirement fund if they allow it. Of course, if you just take the money, you have to pay income tax and a 10% penalty. You can get your money when you are 59 1/2 with no penalty, however.

The current fund choices were made in 1989 after a study was conducted of funds available at that time. Now there are many

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lars. Protection Division has said that the 1999 deadline for minimum clean air standards in the 13 county metro area will not be met. And these standards under the Clean Air Act probably will not be met until sometime after 2003 according to Harold Reheis, EPD Director. And met only if the entire region begins now to lessen its dependence on cars. Atlanta is one of almost 100 urban areas in the US that are non-compliant with the Clean Air Act Amendments.

The ozone action program, along with many other similiar programs, is designed to curb ozone pollution in our area. Here are some solutions being suggested and some departmental ideas.

The Georgia Council for the Arts has twelve employees. About one half of them will have the option to work from home one day a week. That day will flex according to ozone action day designations. One other employee takes Marta, one car pools and two are going to flex their time to meet the 20% reduction requirement. The others are looking at car and van pooling options.

"...the Department of Transportation is committed to doing things that make it possible not to drive..."

Employee commuter options are being touted to help workers develop and implement plans to provide alternatives for reducing personal commuting miles through

van pooling and car pooling. Schedules using flex time for employees on Action Days could help alleviate morning and afternoon rush hour traffic congestion that leads to additional ozone emissions and ozone formation. The use of cleaner fuel is being suggested for those departments with fleet vans or cars. Other options are providing shuttle service from centers of mass transportation and lunch at work incentives to keep workers from driving at the noon hour.

For some departments, other measures are more important. For example using off road constrution equipment after 6PM or not at all on ozone action days. Delay or reschedule ground maintainance activities that require gasoline powered equipment such as mowers, blowers, weed-eaters, chain saws, etc.

Another thing that's recommended is restricting and or limiting indoor and outdoor painting on Action days until after 6 PM or not at all on these days. Refueling fleets after dark or after the Ozone Action Day is an alternative.

State employees are not the only ones who are going to have to bite the bullet. According to Wayne Shackelford, head of DOT, all Atlantans are going to have to drastically alter commuting behavior. He went on to say that the DOT is "committed to doing things that make it possible not to drive." Priorities will focus on HOV lanes and park and ride lots over lanes widening and the outer perimeter.

Atlanta's air quality will continue to dominate news stories as we move towards the year 2000.

Davis -Thompson gives a thumbs up to van pooling

Karen Davis-Thompson, Awards and Contributions Specialist for the Georgia Merit System, van pools from Newnan everyday. The 45 mile trip takes about an hour. There are 15 people who meet every morning in the parking lot at K-Mart in Newnan at 6:50 AM. There's no waiting for would-be stragglers. The van unloads at the Twin Towers and other state office building locations 50 minutes later. There's a little more flexibility in the afternoon, as the van will wait a short time, but generally leaves at 4:50 PM.

The cost for Thompson is about \$52 a month. The amount depends on the distance the van has to travel and the number of riders. The fees offset the cost of operating the van. This is a service offered by the Georgia Building Authority.

The GBA van pool actually started in 1980. An alternative mode of transportation was needed because of the gas crisis of the 70's. It has now developed into a really big service for metro workers. Some 42 vans service 28 communities, including Bremen, Villa Rica, Jonesboro, Douglasville, Conyers and other communities in the counties that surround Atlanta. The GBA furnishes the vans, provides for their maintainance as well as providing liability insurance.

When asked about the advantages, she says the savings in gas, parking and wear and tear on her personal vehicle make van pooling a real bargain. Plus, you can spend time doing productive things on the van. Some listen to radios (using headphones), while others read. A few morning types chat. Thompson, not a morning person, sews.

There are disadvantages. Like no flexiblility in the time the trip begins. And if for some reason she needed to go home in the middle of the day, she would have to find a ride. This could be a real hardship on state employees with children. One of the solutions to this problem that is being considered is offering state vehicles in emergency situations.

The inevitable question about pits stops was asked. It happened only once that she remembers. And, yes, a stop was made.

(401k-con't from page 1)

more and diversified choices out there. And the Merit System has more money and more clout with which to invest, which means they can get better opportunities and administrative considerations. The 401k plan will be offered to any full time (30 hours a week and up) employee and any part-timer who works at least 1000 hours a year. You may invest 10% of you gross salary or \$10,000 a year—which ever of these two amounts is the least.

It's also easier to get money for a financial hardship than it is with the 457. However, there are reasons to be prudent about this because you can't start up contributions again for a year after receiving a hardship withdrawal. Check carefully before making a withdrawal. But the fact remains, if you need it, you can get it.

New administrative charges begin September 30, of this year. At that time, a flat \$ 6 per quarter admin. fee will be charged no matter how many options you take. This encourages you not to put all your eggs in one basket. The fee has been \$3 per option. Now, it just might pay to diversify.

Besides the eight options you can choose from, there's a whole new, one stop shopping plan that lets you pick from three options based on the amount of risk you wish to take. You can choose conservative, moderate or aggressive options.

To help with all the changes, there will be investment seminars and training at many locations around the state. Be sure and check them out. Also, there will be a new web site so you can check on your options.

Here are the new funds:

The Stable Value (Long Term) remains the Fixed Income Option. The Stable Value (Short Term), which was Vanguard Prime Prtf. Money Market is eliminated. The Balanced Fund (Bonds & Stocks) was Vanguard Wellesley Income. It will be replaced by the Dodge & Cox Balanced Fund. A new catagory, Equity Growth and Income is Dodge & Cox Stock. Equity Large-Capt. Growth (Index) remains Vanguard Institutional Index. Equity Large Cap. Growth (Active) changes from Fidelity Magellan to MFS Research. Equity Mid/Large-Cap. Value changes from Vanguard Windsor II to Delaware Decatur Total Return. Equity Small /Mid-Cap Agr. Growth drops Fidelity O-T-C Portfolio and adds Munder Small Company Growth. And Equity

International becomes Delaware Pooled International Equity, replacing International Growth.

Other open enrollment changes

Open enrollment for the flexible Benefits Program is scheduled for April 16 through May 15. (The 401k doesn't open up til July1). This issue of the State Personnel News includes an insert highlighting the program choices, including new features available in 1998-99.

"As we are headed toward the new millennium, it's time for state employees to think about their financial and security needs--many of which are addressed by the Flexible Benefits Program," said Dana Russell, Commissioner of the Georgia Merit System. "Some benefits address short term needs, while others can have a big effect on long term financial security," he added.

The State Health Benefit Plan will see some changes that allow the state to continue to manage health care costs while keeping the employee paid share cost affordable. The plan will reimburse 80% for inpatient hospital coverage under the Standard Option and 90% under the High Option. In addition, the High Option hospital deductible will be applied to each hospital admission just as it is for the Standard Option. Coverage for approved, non-network transplant benefits will be 60% under both Options. In-network transplants will remain at 80% and 90% for Standard and High Option.

Other health news includes expansion of HMO availability into Lumpkin, Dawson and Lincoln counties. And, there's good news in dental benefits---dental plan coverage of preventive care will increase to 100% of eligible expenses. In addition, the lifetime maximum for orthodontia treatment is increasing from \$1000 to \$1500.

The long term disability plan will offer increased benefitis to employees who receive benefits. The minimum monthly benefit will increase from \$50 to \$100 monthly and the maximum monthly benefit will increase from \$3500 to \$4000.

Look for these and all the changes in the new **You Decide!** enrollment booklet. Check the insert for more details. Also, you will receive a personalized Option Statement, a Compensation & Benefits Fact Sheet and a State Health Benefits Plan UPDATER to help in your decisions.

STATE PERSONNEL NEWS

Volume 22, Number 2

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Telework: Substituting technology for transportation

Atlanta's air quality problems are going to continue to make headlines. One solution is teleworking. The concepts of telecommuting, hoteling, satellite offices, home office and virtual office are unfolding both in the private sector and in state government. Governor Miller has said "we in government, who are trying to stimulate economic development on the one hand, while simultaneously trying to solve problems like traffic congestion and air pollution on the other, are very excited about the way in which telecommuting is coming into its own... it's not a passing fad. It's here to stay..."

There are many reasons for teleworking beside the obvious air quality factors. As Georgia Power found out, it's a great employee negotiating chip and it saves money. It reduces employee turnover and improves productivity. They found that it was getting harder and harder to retain workers with good computer skills, so they used it as a negotiating chip. In addition, there was a huge pool of workers who wanted to work part-time (many jobs have been lost due to kids, aging parents, etc.) This freedom has a lot of appeal to Gen-Xers. At American Express, their top ten producers were home agents! The teleworking employee group will expand rapidly as boomers reach retirement age.

The cost savings are substantial. Other companies report using hoteling, where employees call in and reserve an office space at a fixed office site. This can be corporate headquarters or a satellite office. They bring their laptops in, have calls forwarded to that phone and fax number and bingo! They have an office. These "offices" do not necessarily have to be in the more corporate environment. Some people now "office" from

businesses like a Kinko's. The cost savings are substantial in infrastructure, office space and parking, as well. At IBM in Norfolk, Virginia, 58 workers shared 33 work spaces. To help solve parking problems at Georgia State University, students were encouraged to use shuttle buses and free park- and -ride from the stadium parking lot, which was not in use during these hours.

Most of the jobs that lend themselves to telework or more high tech, information/data type jobs. However, a day at home ever so often for "low tech" filing, sorting papers, etc. could be of value to many workers. There are many jobs that do not lend themselves to telework as in the case of those state workers who give direct services.

Georgia is a leader among states who have created an infrastructure that allows for telework. Teleworking is highly complementary to the business objectives of the GeorgiaGain Performance Planning Process. Participants are taught that the end result of the task should be specific, measurable, agreed upon between manager and employee, and should be realistic and target driven. So, in Pay for Performance, employees are rated on outcomes and objectives. Not *where* they were met. Some can be met as easily from home as the office or maybe even better. This relieves some managers of "micro managing" and actually opens up line of communications. Employees and managers have to communicate on a regular basis.

So, rule one is that effective teleworking requires a set of clear work objectives. Next, there needs to be a high standard for employees to qualify for telework. These can be set using performance rating standards, which Georgia already has in place. The service and equipment must be top notch. Employees must have proper equipment, plus user

friendly technical support available. Adaptations must be made at home and family members must respect "work time." Some people need the social contact of the office environment. Some will need only limited contact.

The Department of Transportation's Teleworking Research Team developed teleworking manuals back in 1996. They include manuals for TeleManagers, Teleworkers, and TeleWorking Program Development. Georgia Department of Transportation has done a great job developing these manuals. They are available in hard copy, can be sent electronically or they may be ordered on disk.

In the Office of Planning at the Department of Transportation,

each office has a team to decide alternatives, including teleworking one day a week. They are also using 4 day work weeks and Marta.

Some of the departments and agencies considering telework are the Merit System and the Governor's Office of Criminal Justice Coordinating Council.

The Department of Revenue and Finance, according to **Frank Thach, Commissioner**, will be trying several things, including the 4 day work week, car and van pooling, and telework when it might be feasible.

Georgia Council for the Arts' Yvonne Greene says about half of the staff will be teleworking throughout the entire season. Because most of their work is project oriented, it lends itself to staff being able to work at home one day a week. Telework days will flex to meet the ozone action days.

She also said in her department of twelve staff, of the rest, one car pools, one takes Marta and two will be going to flex time.

Over at the **Department of Revenue, Bonnie Kaplan, Personnel Director**, says they have a lot of computer programmers and that they will be able to telework one or two days a week. Sometimes ozone alert days will allow many people to do "low tech" work at home. All the employees are in favor of these options and are willing to do their part. The department is using the VOAP initiative to institute telework and four day work weeks year round.

Georgia State University and Clayton State College and University have extensive teleworking programs. In fact, Clayton State uses the telework idea for teleclasses. Students are required to have laptops.

Telework, in private enterprise and in government is here to stay.

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Sponsored by the State Personnel Council

Discount Prices on Advance Ticket Purchases:

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Home Address _____
City/State/ZIP _____
Agency _____
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WHITEWATER/American Adventures/St. Mountain
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\$32.00 each ticket

The price of the ticket is the same for adults
and children and is good for one visit
to each of the three attractions during the 1998 season.

_____ tickets @\$32
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Friday, May 1
is try VOAP Day

Departments will go through their planned ozone action day routines on the first of May. It's a dress rehearsal and a way of evaluating their plans.

Make checks and money orders payable to the State Personnel Council. Include self addressed stamped envelope with payment for return of tickets.

Mail to:
State Personnel Council
P. O. Box 347206
Atlanta, GA 30334-7206.

Tickets cannot be purchased in person. No discounts at the gate. Allow ten days for delivery

Four honored at Inaugural Georgia Oglethorpe Conference

Four Georgia organizations were recognized as Pioneers for model practices at the Inaugural Georgia Oglethorpe Annual Conference and Awards banquet last week at Callaway Gardens Resort. Those honored were Dickens Data Systems, Scientific-Atlanta Communications and Tracking Systems, Synthetic Industries and St. Francis Hospital.

In a letter to each of the honorees, Governor Zell Miller said, "I want to commend your model of practices. These are excellent examples of high achievement, and you and all of your employees deserve to be honored for this commitment to excellence."

Although no organization won the Georgia Oglethorpe Award, these four organizations were honored for being Pioneers in the assessment, feedback and recognition process. They each submitted a fifty page application and were evaluated by a panel of nine judges. They were evaluated on leadership, strategic planning, customer and market focus, information and analysis, human resources development and management, process management and business results. They also hosted examiner site visits.

The Georgia Oglethorpe Award represents the highest level of state recognition for performance excellence that a Georgia organization can receive. "Before naming a Georgia Oglethorpe award recipient, our panel of judges want

to see stronger linkages between the deployment of approaches and their ties to results," said Victoria Taylor, executive director, Georgia Oglethorpe Award Process.

The outcome of this award process is to help Atlanta and Georgia based businesses become more competitive, more productive and more customer focused. It was created in 1996 and modeled after the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. It provides a statewide high volume, low cost assessment and feedback process designed to stimulate and recognize excellence.

"We are proud of these honorees," said Carl Swearingen, Georgia Oglethorpe board member and president of Georgia, BellSouth Telecommunications. "they are forerunners in using the Georgia Oglethorpe Award assessment and feedback process as a tool for the continuous pursuit of performance excellence."

The Georgia Oglethorpe Award Criteria for Performance Excellence gives organizations the framework they need to assess and diagnose their processes, procedures and systems—then make changes that drive results. Research has shown that organizations applying the principles encouraged in the Georgia Oglethorpe Award criteria actually experience improved operating performance.

Founded in 1981, Dickens Data Systems is IBM's largest midrange distributor. This company was rec-

ognized in Arthur Anderson's newest book, *Best Practices: Building Your Business with Customer-Focused Solutions*. Dickens Data Systems was honored for its customer advocate and new employee orientation model of practice.

Communications and Tracking Systems (CTS) is a 50 million dollar division of Scientific-Atlanta. It develops technologies and ground systems for tracking and communicating with low earth orbit satellites. CTS was recognized for its leadership system and its product and cycle time improvement program.

Located in Columbus, St. Francis Hospital is a general acute care facility with 154 beds. It also owns the Bradley Center, an 84 bed psychiatric hospital, and CareSouth, a 10 county area home health agency. St. Francis Hospital was recognized for its community involvement and its' employee health and safety program.

The Georgia Oglethorpe Award Process, Inc., is a non profit organization located in the Department of Labor. It is directed by an executive board of business, industry, government, education and health care leaders from throughout the state. The award is named after James Edward Oglethorpe, who founded the colony of Georgia in 1733 and saw it as place of opportunity for all citizens.

The deadline for submissions of nominations for Georgia Oglethorpe Awards is July 1, 1998.



Rosa "Net Monster" Spencer with her ALTA Award.

OPB's Spencer wins ALTA championship

On Saturday, March 14, Rosa Spencer, Personnel Officer with the Office of Planning and Budget in Atlanta, and her teammates won ALTA's (Atlanta Lawn Tennis Association) mixed doubles in city competition. Playing at Level C-7, she and her teammates have now advanced in ranking for the new spring season. Spencer said she will play the rest of her life to keep in shape, adding she wishes she had started playing 20 years ago! Known as the "net monster" by her team, she and all team members were presented pewter plates with the ALTA logo and the inscription "City Champion 1998."

Formerly with Written Exam Development of the Georgia Merit System, Spencer has been with the state ten years in March.

Pierce calls for culture change to curb ozone

(The following is an article by Jeane Pierce, Coordinator of the Voluntary Ozone Action Program, a part of the Environmental Protection Division of the Department of Natural resources. She has been working for several months to plan, organize, educate and facilitate the campaign.)

The Governor's Executive Order regarding VOAP has dramatically accelerated a process of significant cultural change. With that one action, the Governor set into action a serious reexamination within the 85 or so state agencies - from the ways they do business to their relationships to their employees. Agencies are now relooking at strategies like telecommuting, 4x10 schedules, and carpool programs, for example. From the agency policy point of view, they're reexamining when they do certain maintenance activities and even what activities they do. It's been a very impressive, collective effort, from my perspective. It certainly is not one which has been always easy. I talk almost every day with agency representatives who are struggling with designing their new VOAP strategies. Many representatives

are thrilled to be able to breathe life into a previously written telecommute plan. Some employers are very uncomfortable with the idea of marketing alternative transportation to employees or with allowing employees to telecommute, just as many employees are very uncomfortable with the idea of giving up the convenience of driving alone. Cultural change can be messy and uncomfortable. We've discovered many obstacles to be overcome with this process - such as the gratuity clause in the state constitution which prohibits the provision of incentives and the generally low parking pricing for state employees. It will take time to deal with those obstacles and to set up new systems which facilitate the use of alternative transportation, especially during ozone season. This program is not going away nor is our commitment to tackle the ozone problem in Atlanta. By working together, the 26,000 state employees who live in the Atlanta region and their employers can make a significant difference toward improving air quality in the future. If we can remember that cultural change is not always easy, we can keep our perspective on this new initiative.

State Employees Credit Union

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Please send me _____ tickets at \$18 per ticket for a total of _____

Send order with a self addressed stamped envelope to State Employees Credit Union 130 Memorial Drive., SW, Atlanta, GA 30303. Allow 7 days for processing and mailing.

Also, there are limited number of tickets good anytime in the 1998 season for \$24 each. Please me _____ tickets at \$24 each for a total of _____

After May 1st, tickets will be available at the State Employee Credit Union Office.

Are state computers going to crash January 1, 2000?

Have you wondered what will happen to your computer in the year 2000? Well, help is on the way. The Department of Administrative Services and the state's Information Technology Policy Council (ITPC) have been working together since 1996 to address the Year 2000 problem. Their new Information Technology Year 2000 Project is busy figuring out how to upgrade present systems before January 1, 2000. In some cases, systems will be replaced altogether. Also, a state of Georgia Year 2000 Program Management Office will be established under the auspices of the ITPC.

"...cost estimates world wide to fix the Y2K problem is estimated to be \$1 trillion dollars..."

The essence of the Y2K problem (as it is called) is the inability of computer systems to interpret the correct century in a date that indicates the year by using only two digits. Computers that cannot interpret the correct century will either stop running altogether, or, they will continue running, but will potentially provide wrong information or make incorrect calculations. The computer will not know how to read "00." It will assume it to be

1900. Some systems would be more vulnerable than others, particularly those computing mathematical information. The state would no longer be able to process tax returns. An example would be payroll. Also affected would be many of the human resource functions, such as deferred compensation and the ability to keep track of tens of thousands of employees. The state is calling for proposals from private sector vendors who are qualified to perform remediation services for the Year 2000 problem. Part of the problem is that over 50% of the software programs used by state government are over 11 years old and are obsolete. There aren't even programmers around who know them. So many new programs are being looked at as they are developed. Revamping computer systems to solve this will be expensive. However, it is a task that must be performed in a timely manner to ensure state government functions smoothly and efficiently when the new millennium rolls around. In fact, the governor plans to spend some \$152 million dollars to check more than 50 million lines of computer software. The "millennium bug" threatens government and business computer systems around the world. Cost estimates to resolve this crisis range up to \$1 trillion dollars.

Capitol Education Center to be built at Georgia Plaza Park

Crews will begin construction on the new Education Center this spring. The Center will be a state of the art center with multimedia auditorium, classroom, broadcast studio and exhibit space. It will serve the needs of the General Assembly, GPTV, state agencies and departments, as well as visitors to Capitol Hill. One of the main objectives is to provide enhanced educational resources for the many students and visitors to the State Capitol. The first half of the year, some 500 people a day tour the Capitol and museum. The Education Center will serve as an initial orientation area for these groups with a multimedia presentation developed by GPTV and introductions by Secretary of State tour guides prior to a site visit to the Capitol. The center will also be available for use by state agencies as a GSAMS video conference enter. Surveys conducted by GBA in 1996 indicate regular use of the facility by at least 28 agencies.

Another major plus is that the Center can serve as an alternative site for joint legislative sessions of the General Assembly should one of the chambers not be available. A broadcast studio will allow production of GPTV's *Lawmakers* and for training purposes by state schools. The project includes 9000 square feet of renovation to the existing structure and the construction of a 19,650 square foot addition. The construction will primarily be the multimedia audio/visual auditorium as well as a control room located adjacent to the auditorium. In addition to the orientation film for visitors, the auditorium will be used to broadcast legislative proceedings via GPTV cameras in the House, Senate and Appropriations Room. Two large assembly rooms will also provide additional multimedia space for large groups. One of the main objectives is to provide enhanced educational resources for the (continued on page 6)

Human Services Technicians have a tough job

As jobs go, some are easy, some are tough. Some pay a lot and others provide different kinds of riches. The latter is the case of Human Services Technicians. Human Services Technicians (HST's), and there are some 2000, work directly with consumers of health and mental health services in an inpatient hospital or community based program.

"...I not only care for them, I care about them..."

They are instrumental in implementing parts of a consumers' individual treatment plan. They help with performing daily living skills, including dressing, bathing and even toileting. They participate in therapeutic, social and recreational activities. Quite often they have the most direct contact with consumers and provide guidance, support, modeling of behavior,

and are an integral part of a persons recovery. They are a constant in a consumers' life. Someone that sees them every day. A friend.

And just such a person is **Henrietta Coard, HST Lead in Acute Care at Gracewood State School and Hospital.** She has been an HST for fourteen years with the state. In her own words, "being an HST is not a glamorous job. It's an important one, though, and one that family members sometimes can't or won't do. I bathe and shower them and dress them so they will look nice. Their hands shake and tremble, so I cut their food for them and help them to eat. My clients need me and depend on me and I not only care for them, I care about them."

Ms. Coard said when people ask where she works and what she does, they often hasten to change the subject. "But," says Coard, "there's something special about this job." And there's something special about the folks who do this for a living! Coard lives in Augusta, has 3 children and 3 grandchildren.

Support staff professional development opportunities

The Training and Organization Development Division of the Georgia Merit System is offering two opportunities for professional development of support staff for state government.

The National Professional Secretaries Day Conference will be held on Wednesday, April 22, 1998. The live satellite, teleconference sites include Columbus, Decatur, Macon, Rome, Savannah, and Valdosta.

Featured speakers this year include Faith Popcorn, bestselling author and inspiring speaker. Geraldine Kozlowski, International President of Professional Secretaries International, and business woman, author, George-Anne Fay.

As technology and diversity change the workplace, support personnel are in need of guidance in all aspects of their professional lives. This conference will help secretaries and administrative assistants learn to address their goals, as well as those of managers. Strategies for managing time, work and self will be discussed.

Other areas to be covered include improving communication and listening skills, effective use of technology, how to handle the demand of multiple managers, assertiveness without aggression and more.

This conference is for all office support professionals, including administrative assistants, executive assistants, office managers, administrative aides, coordinators, offices assistants. Managers are welcome also.

The Eight Annual Professional Development Conference for Support Staff will be held at the Crowne Plaza in Macon, Georgia, October 7 through 9. Look for more information about this conference in the July edition of *State Personnel News*.

More information on both of these is available by contacting the Training and Organizational Development at 404-371-7371.

Join Toastmasters to become an effective communicator

"Talking and eloquence are not the same; to speak and to speak well are two things. a fool may talk, but a wise man speaks."

Ben Johnson

Effective communications and gracious leadership are two of the most valuable skills you can have. A Toastmasters Club might be just the thing to whet these skills. At meetings, members practice impromptu speaking, present prepared speeches, and conduct meetings. All in a supportive atmosphere. They also hold debates so members can enhance critical thinking skills. You can even practice comedy routines for the club's humorous speech contests! If you're interested, the Toastmaster meetings are held every Tuesday from 12:00 to 1:00 in room 2070 of the East Tower.

Betcha' didn't know. . .

From the Deaprtment of Agriculture, **James Hayes**, Meat Inspector, is the father of twins Jonas and Jarvis. The twins, playing basketball on the Douglass High AAAA team (that went to the tournament playoffs) are just carrying on a family tradition. Siblings Marcus and Katasa both were outstanding players on previous Douglass teams.

Congratulations to Georgia Regional Hospital's Savannah, Clinical Laboratory. They passed the survey for State Licensure with flying colors. The lab staff includes **Mary Ann Seckinger, Gary Clark, Sandy Pullman, Jason Brunner and Victoria Tukes**.

A fall survey of consumer families at **Gracewood State School and Hospital** found that 97.9% thought their family member doing excellent at Gracewood. Their overall rating of Gracewood, for all services, staff and programs, was 100%. Congratulations!

Georgia Building Authority news recently recognized the following GBA employees: **Ken Slaughter, Jane Conn, Ernestine Smith** and **Marjie Wright** for over 20 years of state service; **Stacy Williams**(Police), **Edward Standridge**(Security), **Steve Newton**(MTPeachtree), **Jason Hill**(MTSouth) and **Mark Mashburn**(Shared Services) as being selected as Employees of the Month. Way to go!

The Council for State Personnel Administration Spring Conference was held March 25-27 in Savannah. Attendees were treated to a version of *In the Garden of Good and Evil*, a spoof of the book and movie *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*. Among the leading actors was **Dana Russell**, Commissioner of Georgia Merit Syestem.

(Education Center, continued from 5)

many students and visitors to the State Capitol. The first half of the year, some 500 people a day tour the Capitol and museum. The Education Center will serve as an initial orientation area for these groups with a multimedia presentation developed by GPTV and introductions by Secretary of State tour guides prior to a site visit to the Capitol.

The project, scheduled for completion in January 1999, is the result of efforts by the Georgia General Assembly, the Georgia Building Authority, Secretary of state's Office, Georgia State Financing and Investment Commission and Georgia Public Television. Lord, Aeck and Sargent was selected as the architect for the project. Demolition began in January.

Statue on captiol grounds
honors Governor Ellis Arnall

A new statue graces the grounds of the Georgia State Capitol. It is the tenth one and was dedicated by governor Miller in November of last year. It was the result of work by the Ellis Arnall Tribute Commission.

Ellis Arnall began his public service career as the youngest representative ever elected to the assembly. He was instrumental in writing the new state constitution. He worked to reform election laws, outlawed the poll tax and gave 18 year olds the right to vote. He also pushed for reform of the state's penal system including the outlawing of chains and shackles on prisoners, whipping of prisoners, and established vocational training for inmates and segregation of juvenile first offenders.

The Steel Bandits perform in Washington County High School for students, faculty and senior citizens. Below, TheatreWorks/USA presents "Freedom Train" to elementary students in Hancock County.

Grassroots Arts Program provides
funding to all 159 counties

Through its Grassroots Arts Program, the Georgia Council for the Arts provides funds for arts activities in all corners of the state. The program was started by Governor Zell Miller in 1993 and is administered by the Georgia Council for the Arts. Their goal is to make funds for arts activities available to every county in Georgia.

Last year the legislators appropriated \$381,200 to be distributed to 36 local agencies. These agencies then turned around and granted the money out to projects in all 159 Georgia counties. The formula for divvying the money was half to each county equally and the other half allocated on a per capita basis. The Grassroots Arts Program, GAP fills the "gap" by taking this special legislative appropriation to community based art councils all over Georgia. They in turn, accept applications from surrounding counties' non-profit agencies for arts programs available to the public and re-grant the funds for these local initiatives.

Projects support local arts festivals, in school arts programs, touring groups of professional music, dance, or theatre performances in places that don't usually get these kinds of events. Some of Georgia's poorest counties benefit greatly from this program.

For instance, Atkinson County wanted a place local artists' works could be displayed. Portable panels were erected at Satilla Regional library and a gallery was born! Also, the children in this very poor, agrarian area get little exposure to art. And there wasn't a facility where a live theatre experience could take place. So, a performance of the delightful "Winnie the Pooh" by the Georgia Mountain Theatre was performed at South Georgia college and 450 kids got to see it.

During one summer month, Colquitt had nine story telling times, one evening program, professional story tellers, visual artists, puppeteers and musicians.

Mitchell County had their Invitational Art Show where ten local artists were invited to show five of their works. One hundred fifty people attended the opening and another 900 viewed the works during a two week period.

Cook county had a summer theatre workshop that involved over 2500 area residents in performing and audience participation in a production of "West Side Story".

In the Oconee region, Milledgeville, Baldwin County Allied Arts has served as a regranting agency to Baldwin, Greene, Hancock, Jasper, Jones, Putnam, Taliaferro,

Washington and Wilkinson counties. One of their programs, the Steel Bandits, a Caribbean-type steel band, performed for students, faculty, and members of the senior center. Other programs included a

week residency of cross-culture percussionist Beverly Botsford with international songstress Elise Witt, a week long residency and community performance by Dr. Willie Jackson and the Savannah State Choral Society.

The North Georgia Arts Guild received the Grassroots Arts Grant and used the money for an adult art camp at Camp Dixie in Rabun County. Anyone interested was eligible to participate.

Georgia Renaissance Festival

Spring Festival April 18 - May 31 Weekends - 10:30 AM til 6:00 PM

**Plus Memorial Day - Monday, May 25, 1998
Sponsored by the State Personnel Council**

Adults: regularly \$11.95 save \$2.45

No. of tickets_____ x \$9.50=_____

Children: regularly \$5.75 save .75

ages 6-15 No. of tickets_____ x \$5.00=_____

(children under 6 free) **TOTAL:**_____

It's a rollicking 16th century English country Faire! Thrill to the jousting of knights in the King's Amphitheatre. Enjoy comedy, jugglers, melodious music, a high flying bird of prey show, Shakespearean parodies and so much more! There are ten stages with over 100 shows daily to entertain you. Shop for crafts, food and period souvenirs in the 15 acre Artist's Marketplace featuring 1000's of handcrafted wares. See skilled artisans demonstrate blacksmithing, weaving, sculpting, and wood carving. Feast on an enormous menu of food and drink including roasted turkey legs, savory meat pies, and desserts. It's a day of fun and thrills for the whole family.

Just minutes south of Atlanta's Hartsfield Airport---I-85, exit 12 and follow the signs. For more information call 770-964-8575

Mail orders to : Georgia Renaissance Festival
c/o State Personnel Council
P.O. Box 347206
Atlanta, GA 30334-7206

A self addressed envelope must accompany all orders for return of tickets. Payment should be made by check or money order payable to State Personnel Council. Do not send cash. Allow 10 days to receive tickets. Deadline for ordering: May 23, 1998.

Name:_____
Department:_____
Home Address:_____
City, State, Zip:_____
Business Telephone:_____

Atlanta Gets Down to Earth - Kicks Off 10 Day Environmental Celebration

On April 16th, the Environmental Fund for Georgia will kick-off the first annual Down to Earth Day, a ten-day community-wide celebration in honor of Georgia's environment. This initiative will feature fifty-eight events during April 16-26th to jump-start environmental education, activism, and support in the Atlanta metro area. Down to Earth Day is being organized and promoted through the Environmental Fund for Georgia, which is a federation of 22 environmental groups working cooperatively to raise awareness and funds through workplace giving campaigns and other community activities. Donations generated through EFG directly support the environmental work and projects of its member groups.

For more information, contact the Environmental Fund for Georgia at 404-873-3173 or by email at efg@efg.org. Calendar of events can be found on the Georgia EcoNetwork(www.efg.org.).

Any Questions?

We encourage all State employees to call and write the Merit System with their questions. All questions are directed to the proper authority for answers, and questions and answers will appear in this newsletter.

Question:

The State Merit System marked the date of October, 1997, as the date to award the first "Variable Pay Increases" based on performance. The new Performance Management Process is designed to reward all state employees for meeting their expectations. That is---unless awarding increases would result in expenditures exceeding budgeted funds in that department. In that case, the department head may reduce the increase awards. Is it fair to discover in October, that due to budget restraints, you won't get the increase awarded others in departments whose budgets allow full increases.

Is this really a fair and equitable way of compensating equal pay for equal performance for all state employees throughout the state regardless of which department they may work for?

Could this create an imbalance of employees wishing to transfer to departments with stronger budgets?

Answer:

By law, each agency of state government may only expend such funds as have been budgeted by the General Assembly. Accordingly, each agency must be granted the ability to modify the amount of funds expended on salary increases where necessary to remain within mandated spending limits. No authority other than the General Assembly would possess the ability to direct all state agencies to reduce their awards as a result of fiscal shortfall experiences by an agency or agencies.

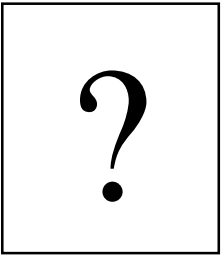
Some employees might, in fact, be tempted to seek employment in another agency as a result of increase availability. Those same employees, however, would have no assurance that the new agency might not experience the same difficulty in succeeding years.

Since agencies do not possess unlimited resources with which to provide salary increases to employees, the current process has been determined to be the most fair and equi-

table alternative available. The only other mechanism which might be utilized would be to grant all increases at the recommended amounts and then terminate sufficient employees to preclude exceeding authorized expenditures.

Question:

In regard to the article in the most recent Personnel Newsletter, I find it a bit misleading as to how state employee raises were handled. It seems no one was made aware of, nor told that our much expected pay raises would be handled the way they were. By all reasons of fairness the amount percentage wise should have been given on each individuals performance and expectations. Not cut because there was not enough funds to adequately cover each ones earnings.



Another problem is if your earned amount put you above your ceiling it should have still applied because that is what good honest, hard working employees have in mind when they go the extra mile to make that good impression in relation to their

job. I thought that the purpose of Georgia Gain was to reward those who try hardest to make their state government look good and be proud to be a state employee.

Answer:

You are correct. An employee's dedication to providing excellent customer service is often an important factor in determining the individual's performance rating. An equally important concept for the performance management system as a whole, however, is giving Georgia's citizens good value for their tax dollars.

The public has entrusted the state with spending tax dollars in a responsible manner. The individuals who establish personnel and fiscal policies for employee salaries recognize that all jobs have a maximum value within the labor market. The policy makers are aware that some high performing employees are near or above the maximum for the pay grade. However, the policy makers believe that the state should not pay more for a job than the maximum for the pay grade. Doing so could lead to paying more for the work performed than the labor market data supports.

When You Can't Breathe, Nothing Else Matters^R is motto of American Lung Association of Georgia

The American Lung Association of Georgia has been proactive in alerting us to air pollution for years. They have gone to great lengths to give factual information, to point out the affects on heath of certain populations and the danger to outdoor workers and enthusiasts. The information in this article was supplied by June Deen, their vice president of public affairs

Ozone (O3) is a highly reactive gas that is a form of oxygen. It results primarily from the action of sunlight on hydrocarbons and nitrogen oxides emitted in fuel combustion. Ozone reacts chemically (oxides) with internal body tissues that it comes in contract with, such as those in the lung. The harmful man-made ground level ozone in the lower atmosphere (troposphere) should not be confused with the natural protective layer of ozone in the upper atmosphere (stratosphere), which screens out the sun's harmful ultraviolet rays.

For the past 20 years the federal air quality standard for ozone has been 0.12 parts per million(ppm) average over one hour. Tests carried out on healthy adults and children undergoing moderate exercise while exposed to this and

even lower levels of ozone show a decrease in the function of the lungs and respiratory system. In 1995, an estimated 70.8 million residents lived in counties classified by the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency as having air quality that violated the national standards of 0.12 ppm over a one hour period of four or more occasions. A report published by the American Lung Association in 1995 estimated that 53.9% of America's children 13 or younger live in areas with unhealthful air.

According to a report released by the American Lung Association in 1996, more than 90 million Americans live in areas that are classified by the EPA as violating the 0.12ppm one-hour standard for ozone. The report found that ozone is linked to approximately 10,000 to 15,000 hospital admissions and an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 emergency room visits in the 13 metro areas that were examined.

In July 1997, the EPA set a new stricter ozone standard of 0.08 ppm average on an eight hour period. The new standard is to be phased in over the next decade.

Ozone acts as a powerful respiratory irritant at the levels frequently found in most of the nation's urban areas during summer months. Ozone exposure may lead to shortness of breath, chest pain when inhaling deeply, and wheezing and coughing. Long term, repeated exposure to high levels of ozone may lead to large reductions in lung function, inflammation of the lung lining and increased respiratory discomfort. The EPA estimates that 5 to 20 percent of the total U.S. population is especially susceptible to the harmful effect of ozone air pollution.

The EPA now has identified three groups of people who are at particular risk from high ozone levels. They are :

--people with pre-existing respiratory disease; those already afflicted with lung disease such as asthma, chronic bronchitis and emphysema

--individuals who exercise outdoors

--"responders" who are more susceptible to ozone exposure

Exercise makes us more vulnerable to health damage from ozone pollutants. We breathe more air during exercise or strenuous work. We draw air more deeply into the lungs. And when we exercise heavily, we breathe mostly by mouth, bypassing the body's first line of defense against pollution, the nose. The connection between

air pollution and exercise should be of major concern to athletes, cyclers, outdoor workers, parents, coaches and others who supervise children, and anyone else who is active outdoors. People who are already vulnerable are even more vulnerable when engaging in exercise or work outdoors during the high ozone season. This includes children and elderly people.

There are many bad side affects of air pollution on your body. Our lungs are among the body's primary points of contact with the outside world. We breathe in an estimated 15,000 liters of air, drawing life giving oxygen across 600 to 900 square feet of surface area in tiny sacs inside the lung. Oxygen is necessary for our muscles to function. In fact, the purpose of exercise training is to improve the body's ability to deliver oxygen. As a result, when we exercise, we may increase our intake by as much as ten times our level at rest. These facts mean that when we exercise in polluted air, we increase our contact with pollutants and increase our vulnerability. Air pollution can interfere with the workings of the lungs, heart and other organs.

The news isn't all bad, however. You can minimize your exposure

to air pollution by following these simple guidelines.

1. Watch the calendar. Ozone smog tends to be worst during the May to September season. Be especially conscious during warm weather. Carbon monoxide pollution levels also are related to the weather, as well as to altitude. In the West, the highest CO2 levels are found in the winter months.
2. Watch the clock. Since sunlight and time are necessary for ozone smog. The highest levels typically occur during the afternoon. And since it is produced primarily by motor vehicles, the highest carbon monoxide levels usually occur during rush hour.
3. Watch the news. Pollution levels are often given with the weather report.
4. If you are going to be outside do so early in the day or in the evening.
5. Avoid midday or afternoon exercise and strenuous work.
6. Avoid congested streets and rush hour traffic. Pollution levels can be as high as 50 feet from the roadway.
7. Make sure teachers, coaches and recreation officials know about air pollution and act accordingly.
8. Mostly, be aware of the quality of the air you breathe!

Fifteenth Annual Charitable Contributions Program raises over \$2.5 million

Administrative Office of the Courts	4,118.00	Lookout Mountain CSB	924.00
Administrative Services	28,899.20	McIntosh Trail CSB	733.00
Agriculture	5,957.02	Medical Assistance	7,129.00
Audits	2,130.00	Merit System	15,389.19
Banking and Finance	5,898.00	Middle Flint CSB	528.00
Board of Regents Colleges and Universities	1,274,011.90	Middle Georgia CSB	840.00
Board of Regents-Central Office	4,467.00	Natural Resources	51,796.90
Coastal CSB7,	493.50	New Horizons CSB	629.00
Cobb/Douglas CSB	1,603.00	Northeast Georgia CSB	5,064.00
Commission on Equal Opportunity	1,520.00	Office of School Readiness	2,365.00
Community Affairs	15,512.00	Ogeechee CSB	4,429.00
Consumer Affairs	1,890.00	Pathways Center CSB	680.00
Corrections	89,579.67	Phoenix Center CSB	2,227.40
Court of Appeals	5,010.00	Pineland CSB	14,349.40
Defense	2,421.00	Planning and Budget	12,426.00
DeKalb CSB	7,652.04	Public Safety	16,442.00
East Central CSB	2,002.00	Public Service Commission	3,175.00
Education	24,938.00	Public Telecommunications Commission	4,507.25
Employees' Retirement System	3,822.00	Revenue	52,457.56
Georgia Student Finance Commission	5,817.75	River Edge CSB	4,358.00
Georgia Forestry Commission	10,564.00	Satilla CSB	1,697.00
Georgia Bureau of Investigation	29,766.00	Secretary of State	10,556.00
Georgia Building Authority	4,224.00	South Georgia CSB	2,505.00
Georgia Pines CSB	2,034.00	State Financing & Investment Comm.	1,670.00
Georgia World Congress Center	5,381.04	Subsequent Injury Trust Fund	1,566.00
Gwinnett/Rockdale/Newton CSB	364.00	Superior Courts	16,818.00
Human Resources	362,667.68	Supreme Court	4,376.00
Industry, Trade and Tourism	5,928.00	Teachers' Retirement System	1,500.00
Insurance Commissioner's Office	5,725.00	Technical and Adult Education	97,772.32
Juvenile Justice	39,570.00	Transportation	151,878.02
Labor	65,974.50	Veterans Service	1,486.00
Law	5,290.00	Workers Compensation	4,675.13
Legislative Offices	4,133.00	1997-98 Campaign	
		Total	\$2,533,312.47

**Thursday, May 14 is
Atlanta's 9th Annual
Clean Commute Day**

*Mark your calendars for
Thursday May 14 and join
more than 300 businesses,
organizations and agencies
to help clean up metro
Atlanta' air.*

The purpose of Clean Commute Day is to educate Atlanta's commuters on how to reduce our traffic congestion and improve our serious air pollution problem through the increased use of telecommuting and alternative transportation. It's sponsored by the American Lung Association's Clean Air Coalition of Metro Atlanta, which is one of the oldest and most successful clean air activities in the nation.